



# BUREAU OF COUNTERTERRORISM

## PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

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### PROGRAMS

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#### **Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program (ATA):**

Since its creation in 1983, the Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program has served as the primary provider of U.S. government antiterrorism training and equipment to law-enforcement agencies of partner nations throughout the world, and has delivered counterterrorism training to more than 90,000 law enforcement personnel from 154 countries.

ATA helps these countries deal effectively with security challenges within their borders, defend against threats to national and regional stability, and deter terrorist operations across borders and regions. From prevention to response to post-incident actions, ATA builds capacity in a wide spectrum of counterterrorism skills, offering courses, seminars, and consultations on more than 80 topics. ATA has active partnerships with 53 countries.

ATA courses help partner nations build law enforcement capacity in investigations, border security, protection of critical targets, leadership and management, regional coordination and cooperation, critical incident management, and cyber security. Routine on-site capabilities-assessment and program-review visits assess critical counterterrorism capabilities and are used to plan assistance.

All ATA courses emphasize the importance of the rule of law and respect for human rights.

The ATA program's policy formulation, strategic guidance, and oversight are managed by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Counterterrorism (CT), while implementation and program administration are the responsibility of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS).

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**Countering Violent Extremism (CVE):** CVE is a pillar of the Administration's strategic approach to counterterrorism. Through a mix of local grants developed and managed by U.S. embassies, and

larger awards managed from Washington, the CVE program pursues three main lines of effort:

1. Provide positive alternatives to those most at-risk of radicalization and recruitment into violent extremism;
2. Counter violent extremist narratives and messaging; and
3. Increase international partner capacity (civil society and government) to address the drivers of radicalization.

In general, CVE programming more closely resembles programs for curtailing recruitment into militias or gangs than traditional public diplomacy or development programming. It requires knowledge of where youth are most susceptible to radicalization and why that is so. We ensure that our areas of focus align with the areas of greatest risk by working with foreign partners and other U.S. government agencies to identify hotspots of radicalization and to design programming. Key areas of programming include:

Community Engagement: Through small grants to U.S. embassies and consulates, the Department of State implements projects that focus on activities that link at-risk youth with responsible influencers and leaders in their communities. These activities include youth sports leagues, leadership development, and problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills. Grants also support the establishment of youth support groups for youth in prisons, and amplifying narratives from victims of terrorism and former terrorists that portray the negative effects of violent extremism.

Programming supports community and law enforcement leadership linkages to identify and eliminate problems within the community. Credible influencers – both local leaders and government actors – provide educational, technological, and community development training to help build

communities that are resistant to violent messaging, thus empowering participants to strengthen the social fabric of their countries.

**Engaging Women:** CVE programming places particular emphasis on engaging women, who are uniquely positioned to counter radicalization both at home and in their communities. We continue to support the networking of CVE women activists. Lastly, we seek to amplify the voices of victims of terrorism, who can credibly articulate the destructive consequences of terrorism, thus helping to dissuade those contemplating violent extremism.

**Prison Disengagement:** We are working to identify and address key nodes of potential radicalization. One priority area for us has been prisons. Many incarcerated terrorists will eventually be released, and we have been working to take steps to decrease the likelihood that they will return to violence. There are also real concerns about potential radicalization inside prisons; effective prison management and good correctional practices can help reduce these risks. To deal with this challenge, we are working with the UN's Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) and the International Center for Counterterrorism (ICCT), a Dutch NGO, to develop an international initiative on prison rehabilitation and disengagement. More than 35 countries, multilateral organizations, and leading independent experts have participated in this initiative.

The **Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC)** was established in 2010, by the President and the Secretary of State and was created to lead an interagency effort to coordinate, orient, and inform government-wide foreign communications activities targeted against terrorism and violent extremism, particularly al-Qa'ida (AQ) and its affiliates and adherents.

Based at the State Department, CSCC works with U.S. embassies and consulates, interagency partners, and outside experts to counter terrorist narratives and misinformation and directly supports U.S. government communicators at our U.S. embassies overseas. CSCC counters terrorist propaganda in the social media environment on a daily basis, and also engages in a variety of projects directly supporting U.S. government communicators working with overseas audiences in critical regions in Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. Through a Resilient Communities Grants program, the CSCC

also works to amplify the voices of survivors and victims of terrorism.

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**Counterterrorist Finance (CTF):** Following financial leads and denying terrorists access to money, resources, and support, is a crucial part of our national counterterrorism strategy. The CTF unit coordinates the delivery of technical assistance and training to governments around the world that seek to improve their ability to investigate, identify, and interdict the flow of money to terrorist groups.

CTF programs build comprehensive and effective legal frameworks and regulatory regimes, establish active and capable Financial Intelligence Units, strengthen the investigative skills of law enforcement entities, bolster prosecutorial and judicial development, and sustain designated training and technical assistance programs to build anti-money laundering/counterterrorist financing capacity.

Working with the Department of Justice (DoJ), the State Department deploys an increasing number of Resident Legal Advisors (RLAs) to key countries and regions to help develop partner governments' justice sector counterterrorism capacity.

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#### **Technical Screening and Interdiction**

**Programs (TSI):** TSI programs disrupt terrorist networks through initiatives that enhance U.S. and our foreign partners' ability to detect terrorists and secure borders. Bilateral terrorism screening information sharing agreements, negotiated pursuant to Homeland Security Presidential Directive 6 (HSPD-6), strengthen our screening capabilities, while the Terrorist Interdiction Program (TIP)/Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES) provides partner countries border security assistance to identify, disrupt, and deter terrorist travel. The number of air, land, and sea ports of entry for TIP has expanded from 127 in 2009 (with zero biometrically enabled) to 193 (with 65 biometrically enabled) as of February 2013.

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**Counterterrorism Preparedness Program:** This program includes a series of national-level domestic and international exercises designed to strengthen the nation's capacity to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from large-scale terrorist attacks involving weapons of mass destruction.

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**Foreign Emergency Support Team (FEST):** The FEST is the U.S. government's only interagency,

on-call, short-notice team poised to respond to terrorist incidents worldwide. The FEST deploys to assist and advise the U.S. Chief of Mission in assessing crises and coordinating U.S. government crisis response activities. The FEST includes representatives from the State Department, DoD, the FBI, and other appropriate agencies, such as the Department of Energy – as well as the intelligence community – as circumstances warrant. FEST composition is flexible and tailored to the specific incident and U.S. Embassy needs. The FEST provides

specialized crisis response expertise to augment existing U.S. Mission and host government capabilities.

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## INITIATIVES

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The **Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF)** is composed of a strategic-level Coordinating Committee and five thematic and regional expert-driven working groups focusing on the criminal justice sector and rule of law; countering violent extremism; and capacity building in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, and Southeast Asia. The GCTF aims to strengthen the international architecture for addressing 21st century terrorism and promotes a strategic, long-term approach to dealing with the threat.

Since its launch in September 2011, the GCTF has mobilized over US \$200 million to strengthen counterterrorism-related rule of law institutions, in particular, for countries transitioning away from emergency law.

Other accomplishments since the launch include the adoption of three sets of good practices that are intended to both provide practical guidance for countries as they seek to enhance their counterterrorism capacity and bring greater strategic coherence to global counterterrorism capacity building efforts:

- 1-The Rabat Memorandum on Good Practices for Effective Counterterrorism Practice in the Criminal Justice Sector;
- 2-The Rome Memorandum on Good Practices for Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders; and
- 3-The Algiers Memorandum on Preventing and Denying the Benefits of Kidnappings for Ransom to Terrorists.

In addition, the GCTF has set in motion the development of two international training centers that will provide platforms for delivering sustainable training in the Forum's two areas of

strategic priority: countering violent extremism and strengthening rule of law institutions.

The UN is a close partner of and participant in the GCTF and its activities. The GCTF serves as a mechanism for furthering the implementation of the universally-agreed UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and, more broadly, to complement and reinforce existing multilateral counterterrorism efforts, starting with those of the UN.

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**Regional Strategic Initiative (RSI):** Denying terrorists safe havens plays a major role in undermining their capacity to operate effectively and forms a key element of our counterterrorism effort. Terrorists operate without regard to national boundaries. Safe havens allow terrorists to recruit, organize, plan, train, and claim turf as a symbol of legitimacy. Physical safe havens usually straddle national borders or exist in regions where ineffective governance allows their presence. Examples include the Pakistan/Afghanistan border, Yemen, the Trans-Sahara region, and Somalia.

To effectively counter safe havens, we increasingly operate in a regional context with the goal of shrinking the space in which terrorists operate. The RSI was developed to encourage Ambassadors and their Country Teams to develop regional approaches to counterterrorism. Under Chief-of-Mission authority, we bring embassy officials, military, law enforcement, and intelligence officers together to collectively assess the threats, pool resources, and devise collaborative strategies, plans, and policy recommendations. RSI groups are in place for Southeast Asia, East Africa, Eastern Mediterranean, Iraq and its Neighbors, South

Asia, Western Hemisphere, Central Asia, and the Trans-Sahara.

Examples of RSI programs approved and funded include the Resident Legal Advisor programs in Malaysia, Mauritania, and Mali/Niger; ongoing support for the Terrorism and Transnational Task Force within the Indonesian Attorney General's Office; border security initiatives in the Eastern Mediterranean; the Ugandan Police Force Community Policing Outreach program; anti-kidnapping for ransom workshops for countries of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership; and the provision of vehicles to the Ministry of Interior of Tunisia.

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**Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP):** Established in 2005, the TSCTP is a U.S. government-funded and implemented multi-faceted, multi-year effort designed to counter violent extremism. The core goals are to enhance the indigenous capacities of governments in the pan-Sahel (Mauritania, Mali, Chad, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Burkina Faso) to confront the challenge posed by terrorist organizations in the trans-Sahara; and to facilitate cooperation between those countries and U.S. partners in the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia). TSCTP focuses on containing and marginalizing terrorist organizations by strengthening individual country and regional counterterrorism capabilities, enhancing and institutionalizing cooperation among the region's security and intelligence organizations, promoting democratic governance, and discrediting terrorist ideology. TSCTP is led by the Bureau of African Affairs.

TSCTP has been successful in slowly building capacity and cooperation despite political setbacks over the years caused by coups d'états, ethnic rebellions, and extra-constitutional actions that have interrupted work and progress with select partner countries.

U.S. training and equipment have assisted Mauritania in its efforts to monitor its border with Mali and sustain professional units during operations against AQIM, similarly, training and equipment have supported Niger's efforts to protect its borders and interdict terrorists attempting transit through its territory. Several TSCTP programs have worked to counter the pull of violent extremism on youth, including educational and training courses in Algeria and Morocco, and extensive youth employment and outreach programs, community development, and media activities in Niger and Chad.

**The Partnership for Regional East African Counterterrorism (PREACT):** PREACT, formerly known as the East Africa Regional Strategic Initiative, is the East Africa counterpart to the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership. First established in 2009, PREACT is a U.S. government-funded and implemented multi-year, multi-faceted program designed to build the counterterrorism capacity and capability of member countries to thwart short-term terrorist threats, counter violent extremism, and address longer-term vulnerabilities. It uses law enforcement, military, and development resources to achieve its strategic objectives, including reducing the operational capacity of terrorist networks, expanding border security, enhancing and institutionalizing cooperation among the region's security organizations, improving democratic governance, and discrediting terrorist ideology. PREACT member countries include Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. EARS is led by the Bureau of African Affairs.

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**International Security Events Group (ISEG):** Under the leadership of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Major Events Coordination Unit, the International Security Events Group (ISEG) coordinates U.S. government interagency efforts to ensure safety at significant international events, such as the Olympic Games. CT's operations division chairs the ISEG Counterterrorism Crisis Response and Exercise Planning Sub-Committees. The Counterterrorism Crisis Response Subcommittee evaluates major international events with an emphasis on planning and preparation for the possible deployment of the Foreign Emergency Support Team (FEST) or other U.S. government response to emerging crises. The Exercise Planning Subcommittee develops and conducts crisis response exercises to enhance U.S. mission and host nation preparations for major international events. Recent ISEG-supported events include the 2012 London Olympics and the 2011 Pan American Games in Mexico.